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Twenty-fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2008 (2011), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2012 and requested me to keep it regularly informed of the situation on the ground as Liberia entered its next critical phase. The present report provides an update on major developments since my special report of 16 April 2012 (S/2012/230) and information on the coordinated strategies and operations of UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in areas along the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, in addition to my recommendations for the renewal of the mandate of UNMIL.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. There was limited reaction within Liberia to the 50-year sentence handed down to the former President, Charles Taylor, by the Special Court for Sierra Leone on 30 May following his conviction on charges of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity during the civil war in Sierra Leone. The development has, however, triggered renewed interest by Liberia's political and civil society actors in the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. On 26 June, an opposition party legislator in the House of Representatives introduced a bill to constitute a war crimes court in Liberia for the prosecution of persons bearing the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Liberian law committed since December 1989. Public hearings on the bill are expected to bring to the fore wider discussions of accountability for atrocities committed during the Liberian civil war, while highlighting the importance of national reconciliation.

3. In April, a workshop brought together the principal institutions mandated to carry out activities related to national reconciliation, during which a strategic road map for national healing and reconciliation was developed. The road map is expected to undergo public and political validation in the form of regional consultations, in addition to legislative and executive endorsement, before its

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planned launch in October. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights has focused its efforts on the implementation of a recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding the "Palava Hut" mechanism (through which perpetrators can seek public forgiveness) and has established related committees in all 15 counties.

4. Notwithstanding a commitment reportedly made to the political opposition by the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, to create an inclusive administration following the contentious election in 2011, only 11 of the 447 persons appointed to the Cabinet and other Government positions were not affiliated with the ruling party as at 1 August. Those excluded to date, including members of the ruling Unity Party, have expressed discontent. On 27 June, some 60 young people from the Unity Party demonstrated in front of the President's residence, demanding her resignation as party leader. They accused her of nepotism and of having neglected the party since her re-election. The President subsequently met party leaders, including representatives of young people, to discuss their grievances.

5. Since the public announcement in February that offshore oil had been discovered in Liberia, the Government has drawn criticism over its handling of related contracts and its perceived lack of transparency in the management of the oil sector. The allocation of oil contracts is under investigation by the legislature, which has also begun to draft new legislation for the sector. At the same time, the National Oil Company of Liberia has initiated a separate process on reforms in the sector by holding a stakeholders' forum to discuss a petroleum policy that is intended to inform the overall governance of the sector.

6. In March, the President submitted to the Senate draft legislation that would have established a constitutional review body. On 28 June, she sought to withdraw that legislation, indicating that the existing Law Reform Commission could undertake the review. Subsequent developments suggest fresh momentum following limited progress in the constitutional reform process. On 7 July, the main opposition party, the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), organized a political consultative forum, bringing together political parties, including the ruling party, and civil society groups to seek consensus on constitutional and electoral reform and to tackle other issues, such as political party financing and national reconciliation. Proposals and timelines were put forward during a follow-up meeting on 20 July.

7. The National Elections Commission conducted by-elections in Sinoe County in April and in Montserrado County in July to fill two vacancies in the House of Representatives. There was controversy when the CDC candidate for the Montserrado seat was almost disqualified for failing to register his candidature before the deadline. Although the Commission ultimately agreed to recognize his candidature, he lost the by-election to the ruling Unity Party candidate, even though Montserrado had previously been regarded as a CDC stronghold. The ruling party also won the by-election in Sinoe County. The outcomes of the elections have led some in the opposition to conclude that the abolition of the requirement of an absolute majority for legislative elections, which took place as a result of the national referendum held in August 2011, favours the incumbent party.

B. Security situation

8. The overall security situation in Liberia remains generally stable, albeit fragile. The main security concerns include civil unrest, public disorder and violence against women and girls. Instability along the border with Côte d'Ivoire has continued to be of concern.

9. On 13 June, a Liberia National Police team investigating an alleged rubber theft reportedly came under fire at the Liberia Agriculture Company plantation in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, which has experienced periodic clashes between the company's employees and illegal tappers, many of whom are former combatants.

10. On 18 July, some 700 students at the University of Liberia participated in a peaceful march in Monrovia, demonstrating against the incumbent student administration for not serving their interests. Soon after the march, violence involving the students erupted in front of the campus and spread along the street, injuring two people and damaging vehicles. The national police arrested 10 students suspected of rioting.

C. Regional issues

11. The porous 700-kilometre-long border with Côte d'Ivoire remained volatile, as indicated in my report of 29 June on UNOCI (S/2012/506). In addition to the killing of seven UNOCI peacekeepers in a direct attack on 8 June, at least 27 civilians were killed in attacks on Ivorian villages near the Liberian border. On 9 July, the Government of Liberia closed the border with Côte d'Ivoire, except for humanitarian activities, and had not reopened it as the present report was being finalized.

12. In mid-June, the Government of Liberia launched "Operation Restore Hope", a joint security operation in Grand Gedeh County, near the most unstable part of the border region, aimed at mitigating the threat posed by armed elements. The joint task force, incorporating the Armed Forces of Liberia, the national police Emergency Response Unit and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, is co-located at a joint operations centre in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County. As part of Operation Restore Hope, the national security forces have arrested more than a dozen suspects and have reportedly issued a list of 10 Liberians and Ivorians, including former commanders of two of the major warring factions during the Liberian civil war, who are wanted for alleged mercenary activities. Four have already been arrested or given themselves up.

13. As I indicated in my report of 29 June on UNOCI, the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, together with UNMIL and UNOCI, held a quadripartite meeting in Abidjan on 13 June, at which they reached agreement to enhance cooperation and to take measures aimed at dealing with the fragile border situation. In addition to enhanced cooperation between their security entities and intensified security operations, both countries agreed to measures to build the confidence of communities and promote national reconciliation on their respective sides of the border. The two Governments also requested the United Nations to assist in organizing a cross-border reconciliation meeting between traditional leaders, to be held in September.

14. Following the attack on the UNOCI peacekeepers on 8 June, UNMIL stepped up its activities in the border area. UNMIL police units have intensified joint patrols with Liberian security agencies in the border area and around refugee camps, while the UNMIL military component has adopted a more robust posture, including by increasing the frequency of air patrols and air-inserted foot patrols. UNMIL also deployed two armed helicopters to Greenville, Sinoe County, which is closer to the border, and has kept one on standby in Monrovia, to support cross-border air operations. UNMIL and UNOCI have enhanced cooperation between their civilian and military components and both missions, in consultation with the two United Nations country teams, have reviewed a plan for immediate initiatives, including security and border control, strengthening State authority in border areas and the sustainable return and reintegration of refugees. They have also finalized a revised concept for "Operation Mayo", which streamlines the planning of concurrent patrols on a fortnightly basis and includes civilian participation in border security meetings.

15. The situation along the borders of Liberia with Guinea and Sierra Leone remained generally stable, with Liberian security agencies and UNMIL continuing to participate in border operations "Loko" and "Seskin" with the Governments of Guinea and Sierra Leone, respectively.

D. Humanitarian situation

16. An extensive verification and biometric registration exercise, conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and humanitarian partners, has confirmed that some 58,000 Ivorian refugees remain in Liberia, mainly as a result of voluntary returns and facilitated repatriations to Côte d'Ivoire, after peaking at some 200,000 refugees in May 2011. More than half of the remaining refugees reside in refugee camps and villages in Grand Gedeh, Maryland and Nimba counties. UNHCR and humanitarian partners continue to facilitate returns to Côte d'Ivoire. Between March and May, the average number of refugees voluntarily repatriated increased to 500 refugees per week, although the attacks in June generated fear, slowing returns and prompting the sporadic arrival of new refugees in Liberia.

17. In view of the decreased number of Ivorian refugees, the Government of Liberia, with support from UNHCR, has initiated an exercise to consolidate refugee camps. In July, one camp in Grand Gedeh County containing some 1,800 residents was closed and its residents transferred to another camp. As part of the plan referred to in paragraph 14 above, the United Nations country teams in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire are working together to develop integrated programming for the reintegration of refugees. On 1 August, a cross-border meeting focused on livelihood issues was held with representation from UNMIL and UNOCI, the two United Nations country teams and concerned non-governmental organizations from both countries to further inform the process.

18. Significant humanitarian and recovery assistance continues to be required to meet the needs of the remaining refugees and their host communities in Grand Gedeh, Maryland, Nimba and River Gee counties. Humanitarian partners in Liberia are supporting around 58,000 refugees, 140,000 vulnerable Liberians and 2,000 third-country nationals. Among those needing support are some 9,000 Liberian refugees who have returned to the country since the beginning of 2012 with

assistance from UNHCR, before the cessation clause for Liberian refugees took effect on 1 July. Their return has increased pressure on the Government of Liberia to identify gainful economic activities in an already limited labour market. Meanwhile, as revised at midyear, the humanitarian appeal requesting $97 million for 2012 is to date funded at only 34 per cent.

E. Human rights developments

19. On 23 June, 41 Ivorian citizens arrested in connection with a weapons cache found in River Gee County in June 2011 were extradited from Liberia at the request of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. UNHCR was not granted access to verify the authenticity of the detainees' identities or to document potential claims to asylum before they were extradited. As an appeal against their extradition was pending, Liberian legislators raised concerns regarding due process and compliance with the extradition treaty between the two countries.

20. On 19 July, the Senate unanimously passed proposed amendments to existing laws, making homosexual acts a felony and prohibiting same-sex marriage. These amendments will become law if passed by the House of Representatives and endorsed by the President. There have been a number of media reports of threats and attacks against gay rights activists in 2012. In addition, during the reporting period, harmful traditional practices continued, including the administration of sassywood as a poison in trial by ordeal, with the perpetrators receiving only relatively minor fines. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has been working with stakeholders, including traditional leaders, to implement Government guidelines regulating the activities of secret societies, including the prohibition of forced initiation. While covering various areas, these guidelines do not touch on the serious issue of female genital mutilation, which continues in the context of many such societies. As a result of secret society activities, the enrolment of children, in particular girls, in formal schooling has continued to fall in some counties.

21. National capacity to monitor and advocate human rights remained weak, although progress was achieved in some areas, including in developing a national human rights action plan, which is expected to be endorsed by the end of 2012. Since 2010, 1,150 Liberian army, police and immigration personnel have received training to promote applicable human rights standards. Initiatives are continuing to ensure that Government institutions include human rights focal points, although these have yet to be established. In early 2012, with UNMIL support, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights conducted a monitoring exercise of conditions in corrections facilities and police detention centres, notifying the appropriate Government agencies of cases of concern requiring action. The Commission continued to face serious internal problems, however, chronically impairing its ability to implement its mandate to receive and investigate complaints of human rights violations.

F. Economic situation

22. Economic growth in 2011 was 6.3 per cent, slightly lower than the projected rate of 6.8 per cent, and is projected at 8.8 per cent in 2012. In May, the President submitted a draft national budget of $649 million for the fiscal year 2012/13 to the

legislature, an increase of about 25 per cent over the previous budget. The modest expansion of the service sector and increases in foreign direct investment, mainly in extractive industries, contributed positively to growth. The strong growth notwithstanding, underemployment and unemployment remain high. At the same time, inflation has been higher than expected, reaching 11 per cent, and food and fuel prices remain elevated. Commodity exports have continued to rebound but prices remain volatile.

23. Following Government-led stakeholder consultations at the county capital level, the second poverty reduction strategy, entitled "Agenda for Transformation through Action", is nearing finalization. It covers the same overarching issues as the first strategy and is organized into three strategic areas: investment in infrastructure (including improving in power generation, roads and ports), investment in people (including developing the skills of the younger population and promoting national reconciliation) and investment in institutions (including promoting economic growth while increasing security and human rights protection). Many of the specific initiatives where implementation was disappointing in the first strategy are accorded priority in the second iteration, while the justice, security and reconciliation sections are aligned with the Liberian Peacebuilding Programme. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism, costing and implementation strategy are being finalized.

III. Development of national security and justice capacity

A. National security strategy and architecture

24. Financial sustainability is recognized as a critical challenge to the development of the Liberian security sector. A recent review of public expenditure in the sector, as noted in my special report of 16 April, recommended increased budgetary support for Liberian security institutions, in particular the police and the immigration agency. In the draft national budget for 2012/13 submitted to the legislature, however, reductions for both institutions are proposed, notwithstanding an overall increase of $3 million for the security sector, mainly in support of the armed forces.

25. The National Bureau of Investigation and the Ministry of National Security have not yet been dissolved as required under an act passed in 2011 aimed at streamlining the security sector. In April, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNMIL undertook an assessment of the Drug Enforcement Agency, which has to date received limited international support as it had been expected to be among the agencies dissolved into the police service. Since it will instead remain as an independent institution, the assessment provided a road map for its reform. Legislation on a range of issues, including gun and drug control and the police, remains pending. In March, the United Nations assessed the capacity of the legislature to provide oversight of the security sector, with the aim of strengthening management and accountability. It found that, while the legislative security committees enjoyed broad powers, effective oversight had been hampered by poor facilities, limited knowledge of security sector reform and lack of dedicated support staff. A key recommendation of the assessment was to develop a civilian complaints board.

26. The 2012 workplan for the three-year Justice and Security Joint Programme, finalized in January, includes the completion of the regional justice and security hub being established in Gbarnga, Bong County, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund. The hub will serve Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties. Most of its infrastructure had been completed by July, and the circuit court is expected to be completed in the coming months. The Government of Liberia and its partners, including the Peacebuilding Commission, have agreed that the next two hubs will be established in Harper, Maryland County, and Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County.

B. National police

27. During the reporting period, the national police carried out several operations, including in the areas bordering Côte d'Ivoire. Those operations demonstrated the important improvements in the police, especially the Emergency Response Unit, but also highlighted staffing, logistical and communications shortfalls, in particular at the county level. A process of determining the minimum staffing levels of trained and equipped officers in all counties is under way, with UNMIL support.

28. On 27 July, the Government of Norway handed over new dormitories, classrooms and kitchen facilities to the national police, increasing the intake capacity of the National Police Training Academy from 300 to 600 recruits per year in line with the Government's stated objective of nearly doubling the size of the police service from its current strength of 4,200 to 8,000 officers. This improvement in intake capacity notwithstanding, challenges remain in identifying sufficient funding, qualified recruits and management capacity. Those challenges will be compounded by the substantial cuts foreseen in the draft national budget for 2012/13 for the national police overall and for the Academy.

29. In April, 150 recruits graduated and a further 101 began field training. An additional 153 recruits began training at the Academy in early May. Police Support Unit class 6, comprising 104 officers, graduated in June. Women comprised, on average, 23 per cent. Efforts also continued to develop existing capacity within the police service, with the Academy having provided in-service training for 665 officers, including 118 women, since the beginning of April. Training in women and child protection, crime scene management and investigation, human rights and community policing was also provided.

30. Several projects included in the national police strategic plan aimed at improving the administrative accountability of the police were completed, including a project to develop procedures to ensure compliance with the Public Finance Management Act and Regulations. Efforts are also under way to develop the forensic capacity of the national police, which would facilitate the effective prosecution of crimes, including through projects supported by UNMIL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Sweden. The Transnational Crime Unit made slow but sustained progress, establishing relationships with counterparts in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

31. The national police continued to develop its capacity to respond to rape and domestic violence through its Women and Children Protection Section, whose 180 officers, approximately one third of whom are women, are deployed to 52 locations throughout Liberia. While intensive in-service training has improved the handling of

cases involving sexual and gender-based violence and their referral by the police to the courts, the criminal justice system continues to face enormous challenges in dealing with such cases.

C. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization

32. The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization continues to develop, with technical and mentoring support from UNMIL and some financial support provided through the Justice and Security Trust Fund by Sweden to enhance the Bureau's capacity along the border area with Côte d'Ivoire. The required comprehensive reform of the institution, which would include streamlining its staffing size and structure and clarifying its mandate and functions vis-à-vis the other security services and the army, has not, however, progressed since my special report of 16 April. Notwithstanding the Government's stated support for the development of the immigration agency, in particular in view of the significant border challenges, its funding allocation has also decreased in the draft national budget for 2012/13.

D. Judicial, legal and corrections institutions

33. Efforts to develop a more holistic approach to justice and security in Liberia continued, including public outreach and initiatives to complement the planned opening of the security and justice hub referred to in paragraph 26 of the present report. In addition, UNMIL continued to support the harmonization of customary and formal justice systems and concluded an assessment of the tribal governor's court, an overlooked aspect of the traditional justice system, and also conducted research to inform policy options for a uniform customary court. The Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law in Monrovia is holding discussions on the development of a curriculum focused on customary justice. The James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute, the national justice sector training institution, has finalized a five-year strategic plan, trained court clerks in the use of a newly developed record-keeping system and drafted legislation that would make the Institute a statutory entity. In line with its strategic plan, the Law Reform Commission initiated an awareness-raising programme to inform the public about its role and undertook capacity-building initiatives, such as mentoring and training in records management, research and legislative drafting and codification.

34. These efforts notwithstanding, access to justice remains limited and victims rarely see cases come to trial, in particular those related to sexual violence. In addition, an inadequate legal framework, insufficient human capacity and limited equipment and infrastructure continue to present significant challenges.

35. Since the beginning of 2012, 11 incidents of prison escapes have been reported. Some 80 per cent of the prison population is made up of pretrial detainees, which is a major source of frustration and overcrowding and contributes to incidents of disorder. A Government-led pretrial detention task force is analysing systemic weaknesses in the justice system and efforts to address them. In February, the Solicitor General and the national police signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at more effective prosecutions, while the fast-track court at Monrovia Central Prison dealing with detainees accused of minor offences was expanded from 6 to 10 magistrate jurisdictions. In addition, the amendment to the jury law drafted in 2011

was resubmitted to the legislature. If enacted, the law would extend the jurisdiction of magistrates' courts and shrink the category of offences requiring jury trials, which would reduce delays.

36. Work has begun to construct a new corrections facility for sentenced prisoners in Montserrado County, following the mobilization of 35 per cent of the required funds from the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Programme. Corrections staffing levels at facilities throughout the country remained low, with absenteeism a common problem. Misconduct often goes unchecked, even in incidents involving alleged facilitation of prison escapes. Capacity-building initiatives continued, however, with 30 national corrections trainers undertaking specialized training in the use of non-lethal force and 15 corrections officers completing a train-the-trainer programme on how to provide in-service training. As part of the national health plan, county health teams began to include prisons in their interventions, a move that has improved prisoner care.

E. Armed forces

37. As indicated in paragraph 12 of the present report, since mid-June the armed forces have been engaged in a joint border security operation with the national police and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization along the border with Côte d'Ivoire. The deployment, initially planned for 90 days, represents the first major security operation conducted by the army, which is projected to be fully operational in 2014.

38. The armed forces currently have 1,921 personnel, including an engineering company and military police. As indicated in my special report of 16 April, attrition is high; in the past year, 90 soldiers left the forces, reportedly as a result of difficult living conditions and poor morale, which may be addressed with the increased allocation for the armed forces proposed in the draft national budget for 2012/13. On 10 May, the United States of America officially handed the armed forces' armoury over to the Ministry of Defence. UNMIL continues to monitor and inspect the army's weapons in line with the recommendations of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia.

39. The Coast Guard, which comprises 51 personnel, continues to develop. Since mid-April, it has conducted five joint aerial maritime patrols with UNMIL, which were aimed at identifying and reporting illegal maritime activities.

IV. Extension of State authority throughout the country

A. State authority

40. The President continued to appoint new local officials, including county superintendents and assistant superintendents for development. Months of delays in some nominations, however, paralyzed county functions, including in Lofa and Maryland counties, where officials were appointed only in June. Overall, fewer than half of the prescribed county coordination meetings have been held in 2012 in all counties, with just over half of the designated Government officials in attendance.

41. Some progress has been made in taking forward the national decentralization and local government strategy, including the completion of 5 of 10 planned studies to inform the drafting of a local government act. In July, 185 traditional leaders from all 15 counties participated in an interactive forum on decentralization, at which they endorsed the decentralization policy and officially requested that they should be closely involved in its implementation.

B. Governance

42. The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission has investigated 25 mostly high-profile corruption cases since March 2009, with 6 submitted to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. No prosecution has been completed and there have been no convictions, however. A bill to implement a code of conduct for the civil service, intended to enhance transparency, accountability and good governance in public service, was reintroduced in the legislature in March. In the meantime, all members of the executive are expected to adhere to the provisions of Executive Order No. 38 on an administrative code of conduct, which was issued by the President in January.

43. As indicated in my special report of 16 April, the Government remains unresponsive to audits of public institutions. To date, no action has been taken to implement the recommendations contained in the 45 audit reports prepared over the past three years by the General Auditing Commission.

C. Natural resources

44. Limited commitment to comply with the minimum standards of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for Rough Diamonds remains apparent. The Presidential Task Force on Diamonds has not met in a year, while its technical committee convened in early July for the first time in seven months. The Government's capacity to control diamond mining and trade, a vital part of the certification scheme, continues to be weak, with the network of regional offices of the Government Diamond Office lacking basic capacity to monitor the movement of diamonds out of affected counties. The United States Agency for International Development has indicated that it will discontinue funding for the property rights and artisanal diamond development programme established in 2010 to assist the Government to improve compliance, partially owing to insufficient commitment.

45. The collection of revenue from the forestry sector continues to pose a significant challenge for the Government, as commercial operators have to date paid only an estimated $1.9 million of the estimated $25.6 million owed to the Government. Communities in concession areas, which by law have the right to 30 per cent of land rental fees paid by forestry concessionaires, have begun to engage with the Government on the matter, with some threatening to disrupt logging operations if their dues are not received by September. Meanwhile, the Government continues to issue large tracts of forest area to commercial operators through private use permits, which have weak enforcement mechanisms and place limited financial and social obligations on companies.

46. Tensions have eased slightly in some areas between communities and rubber and oil palm concessionaires as the Government has engaged in constructive dialogue on issues of concern, including community rights, land ownership and

alternative livelihoods for those who engage in illicit activities around plantations. An interministerial committee led by the Land Commission has improved communication between affected communities, traditional leaders and the concessionaires of the Sime Darby, Maryland Oil Palm and Cavalla Rubber plantations. While such ad hoc interventions are important, there is a need for permanent oversight and regulatory mechanisms to sustain any gains made.

V. Cross-cutting issues

A. Integration of the United Nations system

47. Continued progress was made in the implementation of the "One United Nations" initiative, with the establishment in March of a joint steering committee comprising the Government, the United Nations and development partners. The committee is expected to validate the country's "One" programme, which contains its United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2013-2017 and a costed action plan, by the end of 2012. A technical review to assess the extent to which the action plan promotes women's empowerment and gender equality will inform the validation process. In addition, a five-year change management action plan has been developed in line with the "Delivering as one" requirements and the UNMIL transition to harmonized business practices in key areas, including travel, human resources, procurement and information technology.

48. Since my special report of 16 April, the United Nations family in Liberia has mapped out the civilian support provided by UNMIL to the Government and the United Nations country team, while the country team has completed its capacity assessment.

B. Public information

49. UNMIL worked with the Government and UNOCI to publicize measures taken to reinforce border security. The United Nations communication groups in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire cooperated on a joint communications strategy on cross-border issues.

C. Gender

50. During the reporting period, the Government of Liberia, with support from the United Nations and local partners, carried out initiatives to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, including the establishment of a task force by the gender and justice ministries focused on the development of a comprehensive domestic violence law. The Ministry of Gender and Development has proposed that the goal for the minimum representation of women in security sector institutions be increased from the current 20 per cent to 33 per cent in the second poverty reduction strategy. The Ministry also made a strong commitment to implementing its recently developed strategy to recruit, retain and promote women in the security sector. In addition, some ministries, legislators and non-governmental organizations launched initiatives to make the national budget more gender responsive and to increase the involvement of women in the budget process. An expansion of the gender unit of the

National Elections Commission, from one to five persons, has also been a positive development.

D. HIV/AIDS

51. UNMIL continued to provide mandatory awareness training, voluntary HIV testing and behaviour change communication to all peacekeepers. Since the beginning of the year, 2,316 peacekeepers have been trained, as have 609 young people in six communities near UNMIL deployments.

E. Conduct and discipline

52. UNMIL continued its efforts to ensure compliance with my policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse, including by implementing training for all categories of personnel, performing spot checks of off-limits establishments, carrying out risk assessment visits to military installations and undertaking a local outreach campaign to raise the awareness of Liberian religious leaders and young people's groups. In addition, concerted efforts were made to strengthen advocacy for the continued implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel. Since the beginning of 2012, seven allegations of serious misconduct by peacekeepers have been reported, including three of sexual exploitation and abuse, representing a decrease of 12 per cent compared to the same period in 2011.

F. Security and safety of United Nations personnel

53. Criminal activities and road traffic accidents continued to pose a security threat to United Nations personnel and property, especially in Monrovia. Since the beginning of 2012, one incident of armed robbery targeting United Nations personnel has been reported, in addition to 21 non-weapon-related crimes, including burglary, theft (of two weapons), robbery and assault. One international staff member, four national staff members, three military personnel and one police officer have died as a result of shooting, illness or accident.

VI. Deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

A. Military component

54. The military component of UNMIL has an authorized strength of 7,952 personnel, including a force headquarters in Monrovia, six infantry battalions deployed in two sectors, a battalion-sized quick reaction force based in Monrovia and two forward operating bases near routes to the borders with Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea.

55. In paragraphs 48 to 51 of my special report of 16 April, I proposed adjustments to the military component of UNMIL on the basis of an assessment of the current and projected threats facing Liberia, none of which are of a military nature. The

recommended adjustments include the repatriation of some 4,200 troops in three phases between August 2012 and July 2015, leaving the Mission's military strength at approximately 3,750 troops, including battalions from member countries of the Economic Community of West African States and appropriate enablers. An engineering unit comprising 258 personnel was repatriated in July. The implementation of further reductions will take place in a phased manner, subject to Security Council authorization, and keeping the situation under close review.

56. UNMIL and UNOCI continued to support each other through inter-mission cooperation arrangements pursuant to relevant Security Council resolutions, and enhanced joint and coordinated activities as detailed in paragraph 17 of the present report. In addition, in keeping with Council resolution 2062 (2012), in which the Council endorsed with immediate effect my recommendation to transfer the three armed helicopters deployed in UNMIL to UNOCI, to be used in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia along and across the border, the two missions continued to develop a specific inter-mission cooperation agreement for those helicopters.

B. Police component

57. As at 1 August, the police strength of UNMIL stood at 1,358 personnel, of an authorized ceiling of 1,375, including 470 police advisers, 843 officers in seven formed police units, 16 immigration advisers and 29 corrections officers. There are 176 women in the police component. Three formed police units are deployed in Monrovia and one unit is deployed each in Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh and Lofa counties.

58. In paragraph 53 of my special report of 16 April, I recommended that the number of UNMIL formed police units should be increased by up to three additional units as needed over the coming three years to build the confidence of the people and mitigate the effect of any potential security vacuum resulting from the drawdown of UNMIL troops in the light of the limited crowd-control capacity of the national police. The precise needs would be assessed on the basis of the evolving situation.

59. During the period under review, United Nations police continued to reinforce the institutional capacity of the national police and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, including by implementing projects to improve operational, investigative and administrative capacity. Support was provided to the national police to strengthen its training capacity at various levels, including basic, in-service, field and specialized training. United Nations police also provided operational advice on border security for the security agency officers, including Emergency Response Unit personnel assigned to border counties. In addition, UNMIL recruited specialists to reinforce its police mentoring capacity.

C. Security transition

60. The Government of Liberia and UNMIL have begun planning for the next phase of the Mission's military drawdown, in line with the strategic approach for the gradual handover of the security responsibilities of UNMIL to national authorities proposed in my special report of 16 April. The UNMIL-Government joint transition working group has begun discussions about the sequencing of the closure of UNMIL

military facilities in phases between October 2012 and June 2015 and modalities for informing the Government in advance of any adjustments to the deployment of UNMIL have been established. National security priorities outlined by the Government have been incorporated into the planning process. From 1 to 3 August, a joint UNMIL-Government transition workshop was held in Monrovia to develop a detailed road map to measure and guide the security transition process. Discussions touched on issues of national ownership, appropriate civilian oversight mechanisms, the need for a robust outreach effort to connect with communities and transparency and accountability in financing. The Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum facilitated the workshop, which included the participation of representatives of the Government, the United Nations, civil society, the donor community and selected experts.

VII. Financial aspects

61. The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/275, appropriated the amount of $496.4 million for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, as compared to the appropriation of $525.6 million for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012.

62. As at 26 July 2012, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNMIL amounted to $142.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $3,080.2 million.

63. As at 30 June 2012, amounts owed to troop and formed police contributors totalled some $36.5 million. Troop/formed police costs have been reimbursed for the period up to 31 May 2012, while the costs of contingent-owned equipment have been partially reimbursed for the period up to 31 March 2012, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

64. As at 1 July 2012, 1,667 of the authorized 1,821 civilian personnel were serving in the Mission, of whom 25 per cent were women. Of the 257 substantive staff, 41 per cent were women, while 21.5 per cent of the 1,410 administrative staff were women.

VIII. Observations

65. The people and Government of Liberia continue to make progress in the country's post-conflict recovery. In the six years since the country's first post-conflict democratic elections, the national budget has grown considerably, allowing several significant processes and reforms to go forward and enabling the Government to provide some essential services to its citizens. I welcome the important efforts being made to transform the country. Much remains to be done, however, to address the historical injustices that persist, so that all Liberians feel that they are benefiting from the country's progress in stability, democracy and development. It will therefore be crucial to pursue reforms aimed at enlarging the political space and enhancing inclusiveness, accountability, transparency and fairness, which would give all citizens a meaningful stake in the future of Liberia. Consolidating the still-fragile democracy by strengthening the linkage and trust

between the citizenry and the State will require considerable leadership and political will, in particular from the President and her Government.

66. Coherent and genuine national reconciliation should be at the centre of the Liberian peace process. As it is essential that Liberians have an opportunity to express their views about how best to address all aspects of reconciliation, I welcome the forthcoming consultations among Liberian citizens and political actors on the road map for national reconciliation and encourage a highly participatory process.

67. A comprehensive and inclusive constitutional reform process, inherently a complex task, is also central to national reconciliation and to overcoming many of the structural imbalances and injustices that continue to present risks to the country's stability. Proposed reforms include decentralization, which would open the door for all Liberians to enjoy equitable access to services and to take part in decisions that affect them. I encourage all stakeholders to begin in earnest the process of civic education and dialogue so that Liberians are aware of what is at stake and are able to influence these essential reform processes. I look forward to seeing significant progress in moving the constitutional reform process forward in the coming months.

68. I remain deeply saddened by the killing of seven United Nations peacekeepers on 8 June in Côte d'Ivoire, near the Liberian border. I am also extremely concerned about the continued instability along the shared border, including attacks against Ivorian citizens and the destruction of their homes. I call upon the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to investigate all acts of violence and to hold the perpetrators accountable. At the same time, I would recall the duty of both Governments to act in accordance with their international obligations to respect the rights and protections of all citizens, including due process.

69. I welcome the efforts made by both Governments to enhance their security presence on their respective sides of the border, including the agreement reached during the quadripartite meeting held in Abidjan in June, and I encourage continued resolve in advancing a comprehensive and collaborative approach to tackling insecurity in border areas. The presence of armed elements and their cross-border movements, illicit trafficking and organized crime are all threats that go beyond Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and affect the entire West African region. I therefore welcome efforts to develop a subregional strategy in this regard, in addition to initiatives by West African leaders, including in the context of the Mano River Union, under the leadership of the President of Liberia, and of the Economic Community of West African States, under the leadership of the President of Côte d'Ivoire. The United Nations remains firmly committed to supporting the Governments and organizations of the region in these initiatives.

70. Security measures alone will not create lasting stability. I would therefore underline the importance of devoting attention to reconciliation, confidence-building and the development and strengthening of State authority in border areas. Community members would benefit from support to express any grievances through non-violent, constructive means. In this connection, I welcome proposals to bring together traditional chiefs and elders from both sides of the border in the coming months. UNOCI, UNMIL and the respective United Nations country teams stand ready to support complementary national and regional strategies to take on the

challenges of security, strengthening State authority, reconciliation and development.

71. Liberia must continue to build national institutions capable of maintaining stability, including those within the security sector, effective State authority throughout the country and a functional criminal justice system, among others. With regard to the security transition, in my special report of 16 April I set out a proposed strategic approach to handing over the security responsibilities of UNMIL to national authorities, as agreed with the Government of Liberia, which would allow for a phased transition. As noted by the Government and civil society representatives at the joint transition workshop, issues of national reconciliation, constitutional reform and decentralization are vital to the long-term stability of Liberia. I therefore reiterate the recommendation contained in my special report that UNMIL have a specific mandate to support the people and Government of Liberia in taking forward those identified priority processes, while enhancing its support for security sector and rule of law reforms.

72. Ensuring long-term stability will require the Liberian security sector to be capable of filling any potential security vacuum. It must also benefit from effective oversight mechanisms and enjoy the trust and confidence of the population. To this end, concerted attention is required to enhance the national police, both qualitatively and in numerical strength. Given the importance of border security, the Bureau for Immigration and Naturalization also requires significant support for structural reform. To achieve these objectives, the Government will need to assume a strong and well-coordinated leadership role and provide budgetary and other support. I would therefore encourage it to take measures to identify additional resources within the proposed national budget for 2012/13 to strengthen the police and immigration services. At the same time, I would also encourage international partners to provide further support, either through the Justice and Security Trust Fund or bilaterally, so that the considerable investment already made in restoring peace in Liberia is sustained and made irreversible.

73. Given that bringing security and justice closer to the population is also crucial, I welcome the progress made in constructing the first justice and security hub in Gbarnga, Bong County. I look forward to it becoming operational in the coming months and would encourage the Government to provide for the requisite personnel, equipment and sustainable funding for the hub, in addition to a public information and outreach strategy to inform the population of how to take advantage of its services. UNMIL and partners will observe the operations of the Gbarnga pilot hub so that lessons learned may be applied to future hubs.

74. In my special report of 16 April, I presented recommendations for the next stage of the drawdown of UNMIL. These proposals include the gradual reduction of the Mission by some 4,200 troops in three phases between 2012 and 2015, leaving thereafter a residual presence of approximately 3,750 troops. I further recommended that the police component of UNMIL should maintain its current strength of 498 advisers and 845 officers in seven formed police units and be authorized to add up to three additional formed police units, as needed, over the coming three years. I therefore request that the Security Council approve the recommendations contained in my special report and that it extend the mandate of UNMIL for a period of one year, until 30 September 2013.

75. In conclusion, I should like to welcome my new Special Representative for Liberia, Karin Landgren, who assumed her responsibilities in July, and to express my sincere appreciation to Moustapha Soumaré, who served admirably as my Acting Special Representative for six challenging months. I should also like to thank the civilian and uniformed personnel of UNMIL for their contribution towards peace consolidation in Liberia and all troop- and police-contributing countries, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the International Contact Group for the Mano River Basin, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, the Peacebuilding Commission, multilateral and bilateral donors and Liberian and international non-governmental organizations, for their commitment and contributions to sustaining peace and development in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and police strength

(As at 1 August 2012)

	Military component					
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Civilian police*
Argentina	0	0	0	0		13
Bangladesh	11	7	1 383	1 401		16
Benin	2	1	0	3		0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2	1	0	3		0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0	0	0		9
Brazil	2	2	0	4		0
Bulgaria	2	0	0	2		0
China	2	6	558	566		18
Croatia	0	2	0	2		0
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0		4
Denmark	3	2	0	5		0
Ecuador	2	1	0	3		0
Egypt	7	0	0	7		5
El Salvador	2	0	0	2		1
Ethiopia	9	5	0	14		0
Fiji	0	0	0	0		30
Finland	0	2	0	2		0
France	0	2	0	2		0
Gambia	3	0	0	3		21
Germany	0	0	0	0		5
Ghana	9	8	699	716		18
India	0	0	0	0	244	5
Indonesia	1	0	0	1		0
Jamaica	0	0	0	0		0
Jordan	4	5	115	124	239	10
Kenya	0	0	0	0		23
Kyrgyzstan	3	0	0	3		2
Malaysia	6	0	0	6		0
Mali	1	0	0	1		0
Mongolia	0	0	0	0		0
Montenegro	2	0	0	2		0
Namibia	1	3	0	4		3
Nepal	2	3	15	20	240	7

Country	Military component				Formed police units	Civilian police
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total		
Niger	2	0	0	2		0
Nigeria	12	8	1 550	1 570	120	14
Norway	0	0	0	0		9
Pakistan	7	10	2 702	2 719		19
Paraguay	2	1	0	3		0
Peru	2	2	0	4		0
Philippines	2	1	114	117		41
Poland	2	0	0	2		3
Republic of Korea	1	1	0	2		0
Republic of Moldova	2	0	0	2		0
Romania	2	0	0	2		0
Russian Federation	4	0	0	4		7
Rwanda	0	0	0	0		10
Samoa	0	0	0	0		0
Senegal	1	3	0	4		0
Serbia	4	0	0	4		6
Sri Lanka	0	0	0	0		14
Sweden	0	0	0	0		18
Switzerland	0	0	0	0		3
Togo	2	1	0	3		0
Turkey	0	0	0	0		27
Uganda	0	0	0	0		17
Ukraine	2	2	274	278		20
United States of America	4	6	0	10		15
Uruguay	0	0	0	0		4
Yemen	0	1	0	1		4
Zambia	3	0	0	3		19
Zimbabwe	1	0	0	1		30
Total	**133**	**86**	**7 410**	**7 629**	**843**	**470**

UNMIL
Deployment
August 2012
Sector boundary
International boundary
Provincial boundary
National capital
Airport
Main road
Railroad
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
LIBERIA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Monrovia
Atlantic Ocean
Sector A
Sector B
Gbapolu
Totota
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations
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August 2012 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section